Soyabean Crop Damaged in Maharashtra

296. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that soyabean crop has been badly damaged by the heavy rain in Vidarbha region of Maharashtra in October, 2005;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have sent a Central team there to assess the damage caused;

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefore; and

(e) the recommendations made by it and the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The State Government of Maharashtra has reported that the yield of soyabean crop is likely to be reduced by 20% because of wetting and cracking of pods of the standing crop of soyabean due to the heavy rains in Vidarbha region of Maharashtra in the month of October, 2005.

(c) to (e) The State Government of Maharashtra has not submitted any memorandum to the Government of India on damage to soyabean crop due to the heavy rain in October, 2005. Central Team has not been deputed to the State of Mahrashtra to assess the damage caused by heavy rains to soyabean in October, 2005.

Closure of Agmark Laboratories

297. MS.PRAMILA BOHIDAR:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact the AGMARK laboratories are facing closure in the name of reorganization of the system;

(b) what is the position of the laboratory based at Bhubaneswar in Orissa and what is the action plan of Government to adjust its staff, once it is closed down;

(c) whether Government are aware that remifications of reorganization would be very harsh on the health of the consumers when the adulteration will have a free run; and

(d) if so, the action plan of Government to dispel such apprehensions?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) The Staff Inspection Unit of the Department of Expenditure has, after conducting work measurement, study, recommended for the closure of 13 AGMARK Laboratories of Directorate of Marketing and Inspection, an attached office of the Ministry of Agriculture.

(b) Regional Agmark Laboratory, Bhubaneswar, is one of the laboratories which has been recommended for closure by the Staff Inspection Unit. After closure of this laboratory, its staff would be adjusted in the nearest laboratories/offices of the Directorate of Marketing and Inspection.

(c) The responsibility for checking food adulteration lies with the State Government under the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954. The work of supervising grading work of AGMARK Laboratory at Bhubaneswar will, after its closure, be looked after by Kolkata Laboratory. There would, thus, be no adverse consequences by the closure of the AGMARK Laboratory at Bhubaneswar.

(d) Does not arise.

NCF Recommendation on Credit Reforms in Farm Sector

298. SHRI THANGATAMIL SELVAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Commission on Farmers has called for credit reforms in the farm sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it has also suggested to reduce the interest rate on farm credit, if so, the details thereof; and the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) The National Commission on Farmers in its Second Interim Report submitted